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A PASSIONATE CRAFT

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In SGA

Swearing in of newly elected officials, new library updates

by Allison Turner | News Staff | @allisonkturner

this week's Student Government Association (SGA) meeting, newly elected officers in the freshman class were sworn into office. SGA President Haleigh Pannell officiated the proceedings as Freshman Class President Cole Pillow, Vice President Jess Semmler, Treasurer Eva Dorn, Secretary Emma Carlstrom and Representatives Charlotte Austin and Nathan Boyle took

The students will now assume their roles after being sworn in and will begin their positions effective immediately.

Dean of the Greenwood Library Brent Roberts spoke about updates to the library, which includes a new media box that allows students to rent movies and new furniture installed to the building.

Roberts said on the media box, "Because we want full access to the media box that contains more than 750 DVDs, it is accessible 24-7 between "The Comma" coffee shop. Students can go in anytime and rent stuff out."

The library also put new furniture in on the main floor to make it more welcoming and easily accessible to students, according to Roberts. The furniture includes couches, rocking chairs and booths.

The library is also continuing to host events every semester such as game nights, a genealogy workshop, a book club and their "Long Night Against Procrastination" event in the next few months. They continue to encourage students to use the librarians and resources provided to them by the university if they need help.

In open forum, Webmaster Mason Patrick began by reading aloud questions from the virtual open forum, which can be found on the Longwood SGA website.

Questions that were brought up included the issue regarding the chalk drawings around the rotundas and crowns.

(Haleigh) Pannell said, "It is against the student policies to chalk, it is a policy violation. If it is something that concerns you, you can always call LUPD to assess the situation."

Another question submission addressed their lack of knowledge on meal exchanges versus meal swipes, stating that using meal exchanges takes away extra swipes. Pannell addressed the topic stating students get a certain number of meal exchanges per week depending on what meal plan purchased, and meal exchanges are not extra swipes.

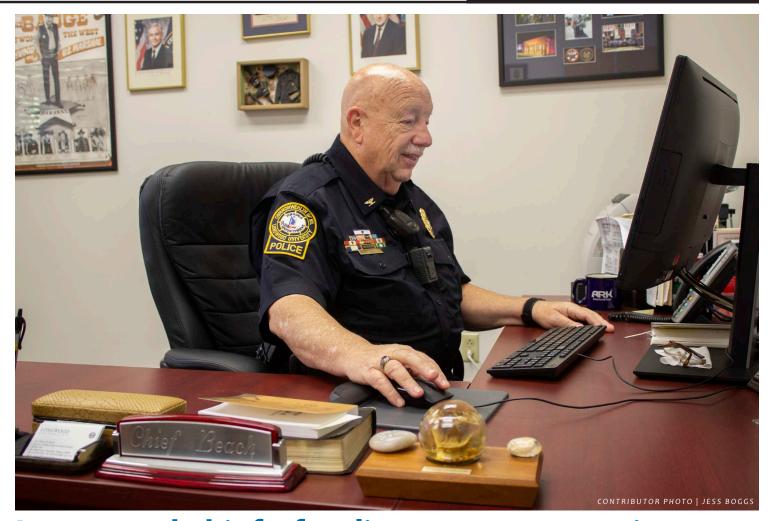
Student Diversity & Inclusion Council (SDIC) Representative Anthony Jackson said there will be a town hall at the end of October for students who are confused about Title IX.

In the Presidents Report, Haleigh Pannell discussed the office hours of the various executive council members, and encouraged all students, not just those on SGA, to utilize them if they have any questions or need clarifications. The hours are posted on the door of the SGA office on the third floor of Upchurch.

In the Executive Senators Report, Executive Senator of Senate Relations Eleanor Carr discussed the new changes the dining hall is making, such as opening a second entrance at Greens to Go. They are also in the process of getting tortillas in the dining hall and honey mustard at Farmgrill for students.

The next SGA meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 24 at 3:45 p.m. inside of the Wilson Chamber at the Upchurch University Center.

SEPT. 23, 2019 03 > NEWS



Longwood chief of police announces retirement

by Allison Turner | News Staff | @allisonkturner

olonel Robert R. Beach, director of public safety & chief of police at Longwood University, has announced his plans to retire at the end of this academic year.

Beach, also known as "Chief Beach", began his time here at Longwood in 2007, obtaining his current position as chief of police at Longwood. Prior to coming here, he served in law enforcement in Lynchburg and Northern Va.

Beach said, "I have been doing this for almost 50 years, and in my time, I have done just about everything you could imagine. I began in 1970 in Lynchburg and rose to the rank of Sergeant before moving to Northern Va where I became the chief of police."

Chief Beach retired in 2001 before moving to Farmville and joining the Longwood University police department in 2007. When he came here, Longwood's police department was very different from what it is today, primarily focusing on more security efforts than law enforcement. But shortly after he arrived, the entire function of the police department shifted.

On April 16, 2007 there was a mass shooting at Virginia Tech, a college not

too far from Longwood. Chief Beach says this shooting and the aftermath changed how universities all across the country, including Longwood, changed their police departments.

Beach said, "My task was to become 80 percent law enforcement and 20 percent security post the Virginia Tech shooting. Our goal is to serve and protect our community."



Since coming to Longwood, Beach has taken on multiple initiatives to improve the safety and well-being of Longwood's campus, including installing video surveillance cameras and starting a new campus-wide alert system. Initiatives such as these have helped create a safer atmosphere and learning environment for students at Longwood.

Beach said, "I'm very proud of the initiatives we have taken and how far we have come as a department during my years here in Farmville."

Vice President for Student Affairs Tim Pierson, who is Chief Beach's supervisor, reflected on his time at Longwood.

He said, "Chief Bob Beach is a dedicated professional whose expertise in the field is among the best in the country. Today, much like any other day, he is on the clock 24 seven for Longwood."

The most enjoyable aspect of his job he said has been working with students and seeing a successful resolution of concern. He enjoys seeing students who have struggled in the past learn and grow from their mistakes, and being a resource to students on Longwood's campus.

Although he is sad to be retiring, Beach knows that the next person to take his position will be just as eager and well-trained as he was when he received this job 13 years ago. Pierson said they have yet to set a specific date for when they will start the search, but it will be set in stone by the end of the fall semester.

Chief Beach's official retirement date is set for July 1, 2020.

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Remica Bingham-Risher begins Longwood Authors Reading Series

by Victoria Thompson | Contributor

ike a lot of writers and avid readers, Remica Bingham-Risher's interest in reading poetry sparked at a young age. She stated, "I found my love of poetry in the fifth grade. My teacher brought in a poem by Langston Hughes and I was blown away."

While she recognized her admiration for poetry, she was not aware of the opportunities available in the poetry world until later in life, which probably sounds familiar to many of the English and Creative Writing students who attended the reading.

She also commented, "I didn't realize I wanted to start writing poetry for a living until I was in college and met Tim Seibles, a fantastic poet in his own right, who made me see that writing poetry in the here and now was a possibility."

On Tuesday September 17, Longwood University kicked off the 2019 Authors Reading Series in Wygal auditorium with the first reader, Bingham-Risher, who as an accomplished poet who has published three poetry books in the past several years.

In between reading her work, Remica Bingham-Risher mentioned some of the main themes written in her most recent book, "Starlight & Error", which reflects an abundance of love for her husband and other family members in her life.

One of the main themes discussed was family and the variety of emotional ways that love for family presents itself. In fact, many of the pieces are inspired by Bingham-Risher's own experiences with her family.

When asked if she ever focuses on any specific family members throughout her writing process, she responded, "I honestly don't focus on anyone when I write poetry; I write what comes. Sometimes my mom shows up, sometimes

my dad or my husband or my children. Sometimes it's a great-great grandmother that I never met."

Music is another main concept that shapes "Starlight & Error", in addition to influencing the poet's life. At the beginning of the reading, she immediately demonstrated her love for music and its connection to her work by singing during her first poem.

"Soul music has influenced my work more than any other because that was the music I heard in my household growing up," recalled

Bingham-Risher, "My dad also loves jazz, my mom loves R&B, so they instilled that love in me. I've always been pretty eclectic when it comes to my own music choices, so all kinds of things—from Beyoncé to Fall Out Boy to Allen Stone to Handel—might end up in a poem

Luni

of mine."

Remica Bringham-Risher reads a few of her poems during the event and gives messages on poetry in between. She opened her first poem by singing a beautiful song.



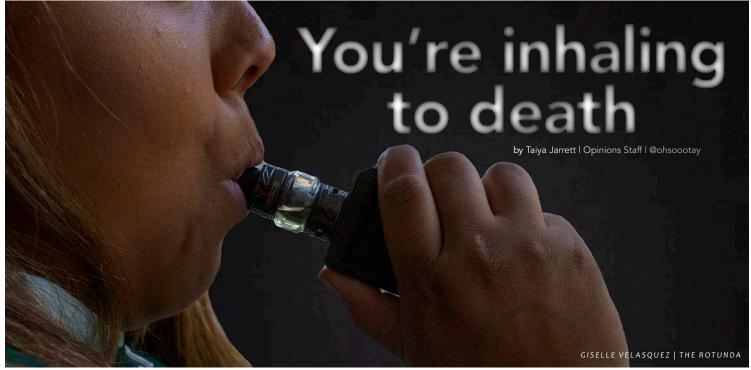
Remica Bringham-Risher signs books after the poetry reading. Two of her published books were for sale during and after the reading for purchase and signing.

When asked how the publishing process has changed since her first book came out, Bingham-Risher admitted, "It really hasn't changed that much. My first book won a poetry prize and was published. My third book won a different poetry prize and was published. So, as a poet, the publishing process is sometimes just to send your work out into the world and hope that someone sees it and understands what you're trying to do. The real hope is that someone will hold it as valuable and necessary work, then give it space."

When thinking of the future, Bingham-Risher is currently working on her fourth book and looks forward to writing poetry on topics beyond her own point of view.

She noted, "the next book I'm working on is all about two of my grandmothers. They converge in Petersburg, Virginia in a strange twist of kismet. I'm looking forward to not having to write about myself in this next book. It's nice to get a break from yourself every once in a while. I also think it's important to delve into where we came from, to look back as a way of helping us continue looking forward.

Bingham-Risher also works as Director of Writing and Faculty Development at Old Dominion University, living with her husband and two children in Norfolk, Virginia.



Vapes, Juuls and other forms of E-cigs have proven to be just as harmful as cigarettes.

ecently racking up the seventh death, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) have created a temporary high with a permanent impact for many young adults, and that's quite frankly something to be fumed

Infused with five percent of nicotine and flavor, these USB shaped battery devices are discreet yet deadly. Ranging from a plethora of flavors, strawberry, mango, and pear to name a few are disguised under the distinct forms of tobacco varying from hookah pens, e-hookahs, vape pens, and Juuls.

E-cigarettes come in multiple flavors, slim appearance and convenient design, this makes it appealing to young adults, particularly college-aged students from 18-24.

Contrary to making up a majority of the demographic for e-cigarette usage, college-aged students are not the primary intended audience.

According to JUUL's Chief Administrative Officer in a recent BuzzFeed interview, the intended audience and purpose for most of these e-cigarette products is to "get adult smokers to switch away from cigarettes, the designers wanted to make a product that wouldn't visually remind people of cigarettes since they are trying to quit, but still provide the same nicotine delivery and sensory aspects of a cigarette," not for pleasure and enjoyment.

reality, that purpose has unfortunately become distorted and overall misused, especially by its unintended consumer. As the objective

is to lessen the smoking usage for people who already smoke cigarettes, this inadvertently allows non-smokers to become heavily reliant on this highly addictive stimulant drug; nicotine, due to their familiarity. Non-smokers may be under the assumption that e-cigarettes are harmless and ineffective to one's health. Yet, that notion is inaccurate.

As of recently the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions reported, "more than 400 previously healthy young people have been

this reoccurrence has generated a red flag to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as this has emerged into a health epidemic.

In 2017 a plan

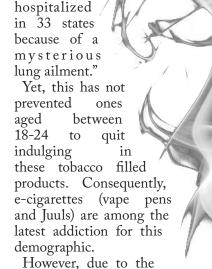
the FDA announced that would take initiative in regulating tobacco in efforts limit addiction amongst the youth. "This plan will serve as a multi-year roadmap to better protect kids and significantly reduce tobaccorelated disease and death in the U.S."

By moving forward, in spring of 2018 the FDA issued an advance notice to rule-makers to fasten the process of regulating flavors in tobacco products and

a year later 16 states, including Virginia, has newly implemented a law that raises the minimum age to buy tobacco, including cigarettes and e-cigarettes, from 18 to 21, in an effort to prevent young people from smoking.

That said, as the e-cigarette market continues to make a profit off your possible last breath, it's best to have them not hold their

breath.



on-going phenomenon,

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Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

ollowing the first season's release on Netflix in 2017, "13 Reasons Why" faced a critical amount of backlash for the implicit messages about suicide that the show conveyed to its young and impressionable audience.

The backlash only increased when teen suicide rates reportedly increased after the show's debut.

Parents, like Joyce Deithorn, whose teen had watched "13 Reasons Why" and later committed suicide, felt as though the show was a contributing factor that led up to or influenced the death of their child.

For this reason, the show has been condemned for misinterpreting suicide as an act of revenge rather than an act of mental illness or emotional pain.

Scenes like, the initial main character, Hannah Baker's suicide also received criticism for depicting self-harm to a vulnerable audience.

As a result, the scene has since been edited out of the series.

Creator of the show, Brian Yorkey, details that the intent behind the scene was not to potentially glorify the act of suicide.

"Our creative intent in portraying the ugly, painful reality of suicide in such graphic detail in Season 1 was to tell the truth about the horror of such an act, and make sure no one would ever wish to emulate it."

However, critics still feel as though adolescent trauma is exploited throughout the series, with themes like drug abuse, violence and sex being amplified to the point of extremity.

Though there are clearly negative aspects of the show that should not go unnoticed, such as dramatizing and romanticizing the act of suicide, there are also some important lessons that are emphasized in the show that can have a positive impact on an audience.

In season three, in particular, the show focuses heavily on recovery.

Amidst unfolding secrets and a murder mystery, audiences are exposed to the aftermath of sexual assault, specifically focusing more on characters Jessica Davis and Tyler Down, who both handle their experiences differently.

Jessica is outspoken and angry, while Tyler is more reserved and takes time to open up about his incident.

It's important to show the different sides of emotionally healing from sexual assault. The idea of overcoming something as traumatic as rape is complex; the process isn't black and white.

The show asserts that boys are victims of sexual assault as well, and that their pain is just as valid. Arguably, these scenes from season three encourage males who may be victims themselves to speak up about their experiences even if it's just to a trusted friend.

Furthermore, the series spends time focusing on activism, allowing the characters to stand up against the abuse they faced that was blatantly ignored by school faculty, something that is, unfortunately, a reality in real-world sexual assault cases.

Jessica not only uses her voice to raise awareness to the hidden survivors around her, but also rediscovers who she is, outside of being a victim, and reclaims her body.

Both Jessica and Tyler eventually find solace in reaching out and sharing their experience once they were ready and seek help in moving forward.

It is easy to cast criticism towards the writers and producers of "13 Reasons Why", but looking past the controversy, one can see how a show like this is a catalyst that incites people to open up about taboo topics, that unfortunately take place in schools all around the world.

What many critics also seem to forget is that shows, like Degrassi, that aired on television in America for a period of time in the early 2000s, also focused on some of the same ideas of suicide,

violence, sexual abuse and drugs.

Time's have changed, but the issues some teenagers face are still present and prevalent today, especially now that technology and social media plays more of a role in the daily lives of teens and young adults.

There is no denying that 13 Reason Why's themes and elements are not suitable for everyone, which is why warnings are given before starting each episode and hotlines are listed afterward. The show also provides a link to their website, 13reasonswhy.info, that directs those who are struggling with any of the show's topics to helpful resources.

Notably, characters in the show don't take their own advice in this aspect, but it's also important to note that "13 Reasons Why" is a show, which needs a plot and drama to provide conflict and move the story along.

Like with any television series, "13 Reasons Why" has its flaws.

Though the criticism of this show should not be forgotten and future seasons and episodes should take note of what audiences find controversial; there still needs to be exposure of these types of issues.

No exposure means fewer people are willing to talk openly about these difficult topics.

No matter your feelings towards "13 Reasons Why", the show did exactly what it intended to do, and that is start a conversation.

It is important for each and every one of us to start the conversation; not only in months like September, which is suicide prevention month, or April, which is the month for sexual assault awareness and prevention, but every day of every month.

Reach out. Hotlines are available 24-hours a day.

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

It's common in fiction of any kind to use the fantastical to examine deeper and more common truths of humanity. Films like "Blade Runner" and "The Truman Show" have used elaborate and fanciful concepts to look at the simple concept of identity. "Ad Astra" is following in the footsteps of those films, using the concept of a not-to-distant future and space travel to examine some deeply human ideas.

Brad Pitt ("Fight Club," "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button") stars as Roy McBride, the lone spaceman traveling across the galaxy to find his longlost father, played by Tommy Lee Jones ("Men in Black," "No Country for Old Men"). Both Pitt and Jones are delivering career best performances here. While Jones is on-screen less than Pitt, the moments where he is are captivating thanks to a deeply soulful and weathered delivery. There's a loss and emptiness to his character that feels genuinely authentic and heartbreaking.

Pitt, meanwhile, is an absolute showstopper. While it's easy to throw criticism at the abundance of voice-over present in the film, it at least makes sense within the context of his extensive space travel solitude and the "psychology exams" the film brings up. Regardless, Pitt is delivering a stern and cold character whose life and character fundamentally changed over the two-hour run-time. It feels so authentic and real, as if you're watching a documentary of a man whose core beliefs are being changed over the course of his life.

Apart from Pitt and Jones, the rest of the cast consists of roles so brief they may as well be cameos. There is an extended sequence on a space shuttle to Mars with some great smaller roles and chemistry between the supporting cast and Pitt, but it's over too quickly to really make an impact.

Ruth Negga ("Warcraft," "Loving") and Donald Sutherland ("Ordinary People," "Animal House") are the only supporting members present for long periods of time. Negga is as fantastic as she's always been, but is painfully underutilized here. Sutherland is a victim of the same fate, introduced with boatloads of character potential, but written out in a fairly understated manner.

The script, penned by director James Gray ("The Lost City of Z," "We Own the Night") and Ethan Gross ("Fringe"), manages to straddle the

nanages to straddle the



believability and wordy vocabulary extremely well. It never falls into the pitfalls of a film like "The Goldfinch," instead settling into a neat spot of vocabulary heavy seriousness. The middle of the film is a bit strenuous, as that is when the pacing drags for a bit. But it's only really one scene that feels out of place, a distress signal, and it at least has a purpose, even if it doesn't seem entirely necessary.

However, where "Astra" truly shines is in the moment of quiet contemplation. This is an absolutely knock-out gorgeous film, without a doubt containing the best cinematography of the year so far, courtesy of cinematographer Hoyte van Hoytema ("her," "Interstellar"). Some moments swell with incredible beauty and jaw-dropping vistas. When the seamless mix of practical and computer effects is coupled with that cinematography and the score from Lorne Balfe ("The Florida Project," "The LEGO Batman Movie") and Max Richter ("Jiro Dreams of Sushi," "The Leftovers"), it becomes a purely incredible achievement in atmosphere.

Thankfully, Gray and Pitt put that atmosphere to good use. This is not a toothless film, and despite the inky blackness of space, there is a lot to ruminate on after the credits start to roll. The concepts of home, as well as what a parent owes their children, are constantly dealt with throughout the surprisingly short 124-minute run-time.

It might very well be one of the most affecting films to ever touch upon the subjects of isolation and loneliness.

Despite these heady themes, it never feels like a downer either. There's a warmth to "Ad Astra" that helps permeate through the seriousness of the subject matter to create a film that isn't lighthearted by any means but feels remarkably human. It eschews

the melancholy feelings from films like "Blade Runner 2049" or "Interstellar" and it creates a much more appealing film to the general populous as a result,

without sacrificing the artistry.

It is worth noting that, even with its shorter than blockbuster length and consistent pacing, this a slow burn of a film, and therefore won't be for everyone. Some moments just exist to showcase the mental state of the characters, and while they are satisfying in a story context, they might not be particularly entertaining for a general movie-going audience.

For those willing to see a slow burn film through, "Ad Astra" is masterclass in emotional authenticity and theme work. For a film about space, the authenticity and artistry of the atmosphere is undeniable. Lead by career best performances from Brad Pitt and Tommy Lee Jones, this is a singularly wondrous piece of science-fiction, with only minor blemishes from underutilized supporting characters and a somewhat out of place sequence. It's at times thought provoking, thrilling, gorgeous and insightful, sometimes all at once. Talk about shooting for the stars.

★★★★ ↓ 4.5/5

AD ASTRA





EarthGang creates a magical atmosphere with "Mirrorland"

by LeDaniel Jackson | A&E Staff | @xidjoeker500

(Mirrorland" is the third studio album from the hip-hop group EarthGang, based out of Atlanta, Georgia. Rappers Johnny Venus and Doctur Dot make this duo unique by combing rap, R&B, jazz and funk. "Mirrorland" pays homage to the popular movie "The Wiz" and it shows with the first song "LaLa Challenge."

It starts this album with a soulful R&B beat while Johnny Venus starts to create the atmosphere for this song. Doctur Dot then comes in and delivers a great verse, as well as matching the intensity of Venus. Then the song makes a hard turn into a crazy upbeat type. "LaLa Challenge" is a great opener to this album and it sets the tone for the next song "UP."

This song keeps the energy going with its psychedelic hip-hop beat. Venus sets the pace with his unique voice to match the tone of the track. His inspiration comes from the movie "John Q" which you can see with his intensity and craziness. Dot comes in with a calmer verse while matching the speed of Venus' rapping. The first two songs show how good the chemistry is between the two

VSUN

"Bank" is a braggadocious track

artists.

that includes a heavy trap beat as well as Venus and Dot talking about their path to success. Venus touches on topics with lyrics like "You measure a man by they likes on the 'Gram, but how do he move under pressure?" Dot comes with some clever lines like "Hypebeast/ F*** the hype, been a beast, I was born with teeth." While this topic is bland, the production and the performances of the artists make it listenable.

"Swivel" is about how Venus and Dot always keep their guard down with facing their fears. EarthGang uses old-school hip-hop to explain their topic while using their unique voices. This track also includes the two artists rapping more

frequently than others.

Doc starts the track with a surprisingly good flow while Venus comes in to bring m o r e

energy to the song.

"Tequila" marks the first collaboration between EarthGang and T-Pain. It discusses how the rappers deal with stress by drinking. The track includes a tropical beat mixed with horns and guitar. Dot makes good use of his vocals especially whenever he sings the word "Tequila." Venus joins Dot in the chorus and gives his verse about how he relieves stress. T-Pain's verse was average at best, but he matches the vibe of the song.

"Blue Moon" starts with a psychedelic instrumental that meshes well with Dot's voice. It talks about how busy the artists are with their music careers becoming more stressful. Dot's verse is surprisingly average and Venus over shines him with his witty lyrics and weird voice. However, the song's production does give it some life and does enhance the performance of the two artists.

Overall "Mirrorland" does a good job of creating an atmosphere similar to "The Wiz." The only negative is when the production outshines the artists. While the it is amazing, EarthGang sounds bland over these great beats. Besides that, EarthGang delivers a very good album.



SEPT. 23, 2019 09 > SPORTS

Fall sports update: Men's soccer shines early

Conference clashes and finding momentum highlight early fall sports action

by Patrick Sanderson | Assistant Sports Editor | @psanderson20

ith the fall sports season in full swing, the Longwood men's and women's soccer, field hockey and cross-country teams have begun to establish a working ground to feed off of as all teams enter a long midseason stretch ahead of their all-important conference schedules. Here's where they stand:

Following a disappointing 2018 season, head coach Jon Atkinson has led his men's soccer program to a red-hot start, winning three of their first four games, including a 5-1 thrashing of Virginia Military Institute (VMI) at home. Following their slim loss to Navy on Wednesday, the Lancers fell to 3-2 with just one game remaining on the non-conference docket. However, Atkinson's squad has outscored their opponents 12-4 through five games, leading the Big South conference in goals and allowing the fewest goals thus far.

Their lightning start came in part by stellar performances from senior forward Mikel Abando and junior midfielder Ander Etxaniz, who was given Big South Player of the Week honors, as both have netted four goals in five games. The Lancers boast six different scorers, and look to regain momentum when they visit James Madison on Sep. 13.

The women's soccer program, who was ranked number three in the Big South preseason poll, has kicked-off to a less-than-ideal start for a team who has been a championship contender for the past few years. Veteran head coach Todd Dyer's squad has started 2-5 and has been outscored by their opponents, 13-7 as they have begun conference play this past weekend.

However, Dyer previously stated the non-conference schedule was set up to test his team, knowing it wouldn't be a walk-in-the-park. Earlier, he expressed concerns about formations and strategies he was using to fit specific roles, as well as early season injury concerns, but hopes to resolve these and remain a powerhouse in the Big South as they are on the road at Hampton on Wednesday, Sept. 25.

The Longwood field hockey team is not, by any means, an easy team to beat.

After putting up fights early in the season against Monmouth and Georgetown, head coach Iain Byers' team sits at 4-2, coming off their first Mid-American Conference (MAC) battle at home against Central Michigan on Friday. The Lancers have allowed five goals, the second-fewest in the conference, and carry an eight-goal differential only six games into the season.

Leading the way for the Lancers is senior forward Olivia Wawrzyniak, averaging

six shots per game along with three goals, only behind junior forward Karly Harwood with four, who sits fourth in the conference in this category. Their mentality of taking their season one game at a time is in full effect, as they look to dethrone conference powerhouses Kent State and Miami (OH) later this season, seeking the coveted MAC championship in November.

Second-year head

coach Daniel Wooten and both his men's and women's cross country programs are in the midst of a two-week rest before their Queen City Invitational in North Carolina on Sep. 27. Previously, in the first two invitationals of the year, junior Casey Williams has made a name for herself as one of the top runners in the Big South, finishing 31st in the Elon Invitational and sixth place in the three-team Big South Preview race, clocking personal records in each.

The men's team had two top-10 finishes at the Big South Preview, headed by Nick Howell, who placed ninth out of 18 participants. This finish led the men's team to a third place finish, while the women's squad placed second, only behind Campbell. Following the Queen City Invitational, the team has three races left, including the Big South Championship in early November, followed by the NCAA Southeast Regional in Charlottesville.



Sophomore Leif VanSlyke weaves his way trough the Navy defense.



A.J. Kmiec carries forward and eyes teammate Ander Etxaniz in the midfield.

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Women's Basketball looks to continu

by Kurt Martin | Sports Editor | @lamKurt14

A fter inheriting a struggling women's basketball program one season ago, second year head coach Rebecca Tillett knew the rebuilding process would not be easy.

Despite a tough record of 3-27 a season ago, Tillett said she was encouraged by the team's ability to pull close in the late stages of games down the stretch and feels that can serve as a launch pad into this season.

"I think this team is going to be more competitive in general. How quickly will that translate is the question that everyone wants to know, including me," said Tillett. "I think what you have to know in those moments is how quickly are they going to gel together, and that's going to be the answer that provides how quickly do wins translate."

Tillett said the team is still growing together as time passes, but has yet to face the adversity of which a game presents.

"So that's when I think we will really know, you

know, how strong is that chemistry? But so far I am just so pleased with the energy of this group, the attention to detail and the desire to want to elevate this program," she said.

The Lancers, alongside 2018-19 All Big-South second-team selection, senior forward Dayna Rouse, return four players from last season, all with starting experience including: sophomore guard Milou Vennema, sophomore forward Akila Smith, junior forward Mallory Odell, senior guard Jada Russell and senior guard Khaila Hall.

On the other hand, the rest of the roster sheet is filled by seven newcomers; as four come to Farmville by way of freshman status and three as

junior transfers.

Tillett said the college experience the three junior transfers (point guard Tra'Dayja Smith, forward Andrijana Reljic and point guard Allysah 'Cookie' Booth) bring to the program by way of being in big games before is a very important thing.

> SPORTS SEPT. 23, 2019



e rebuilding in year two of Tillett era

"The way in which they approach practice, the way they approach lifting; it just has a bit of seriousness to it that I think we needed," she added. "I think they have added value already with the way they approach preparation."

She also mentioned all freshman new to the team this year (guard Kyla McMakin, guard Adriana Shipp, forward Tayonna Robertson and guard Anne-Hamilton Leroy) have the ability to produce, but have to first get through the learning curve of playing defense at the college level to fully reach their potential.

With these variety of new faces added to the locker room, Rouse said she has had to up her level of leadership, alongside her fellow senior

teammates

"Me, Jada (Russell) and Khaila (Hall) have been here for four years, so they are obviously looking up to us a lot," she said. "It's sort of a natural role to fall into."

Alongside of increased leadership, Rouse said she has worked in the offseason on her jump shot to extend her range to become more of a threat from both midrange and the three-point line.

This year's team will look to improve on an 0-15 mark on the road from a season ago. Gaining the experience and ability to win on the road was a focal point in the team's out of season schedule, according to Tillett.

"Last year, we were not successful on the road, and so that will be a huge focus in the non-conference is to figure out how to win on the road, what does that take." she said. "It takes your preparation from leaving Longwood, all the way until tip-off, and the ending buzzer to put it all together.

The Lancers will hold a scrimmage inside of Willett Hall on October 19, as they take on the Spartans from UNC Greensboro, and will begin the regular season on November 6, taking on

James Madison (JMU) in a road contest.



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